

NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF ILLINOIS

RONALD J. TENPAS
UNITED STATES ATTORNEY

Nine Executive Drive, Fairview Heights, Illinois 62208, Telephone (618) 628-3700

For Immediate Release

September 15, 2005

Ronald J. Tenpas, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Illinois, announced today that on September 7, 2005, a Federal Grand Jury sitting in Benton returned a two count indictment charging **ROBERT E. BETTS**, age 49, of Old Shawneetown, Illinois, with conspiring to manufacture, distribute, and possess with intent to distribute over 50 grams of methamphetamine (Count 1) and with being an Armed Career Criminal in possession of firearm ammunition (Count 2).

The indictment was unsealed yesterday following BETTS' arrest and appearance in United States District Court in Benton.

An indictment is a formal charge against a defendant. Under the law, a defendant is presumed to be innocent of a charge until proved guilty beyond a reasonable doubt to the satisfaction of a jury.

The drug charge carries a penalty of from between 5 years and 40 years imprisonment, up to a \$2 million fine, and a term of at least 4 years' supervised release to follow incarceration. The ammunition count carries a penalty of from 15 years to life imprisonment, a \$250,000 fine, and 5 years of supervised release.

BETTS was remanded to the custody of the United States Marshal pending further proceedings.

Information for the indictment was obtained through the cooperative efforts of the Southern Illinois Drug Task Force, the Illinois State Police, the Shawneetown Police Department, the Gallatin County State's Attorney's Office, the Gallatin County Sheriff's Department, the Saline County State's Attorney's Office, the Saline County Sheriff's Department, the White County State's Attorney's Office, the White County Sheriff's Department, the Carmi Police Department, the Posey County, Indiana, Narcotics Task Force, the United States Attorney's Office, and the United States Drug Enforcement Administration.

The case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney James M. Cutchin.